

CHICAGO—On the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Columbine shooting tragedy, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) announced a bill to improve crime gun tracing and crack down on the illegal gun market. The TRACE (Trafficking Reduction and Criminal Enforcement) Act would give the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) a greater ability to identify the source of illicit guns and choke off the supply to traffickers.

***“When illegal guns flood our streets, precious lives are lost and communities are destroyed,” said Quigley. “The TRACE Act is common-sense for public safety, and would help law enforcement close the loopholes that allow criminals to buy and traffic guns .”***

***“We applaud Congressman Quigley for introducing the TRACE Act, a bill that will help level the playing field in the fight against illegal guns and gunmen who have no regard for life and no regard for the safety of our communities,” said Paul Helmke, President of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. “We applaud him for giving our law enforcement officers a fighting chance to do their jobs and help make our country safer. With so many federal laws riddled with loopholes, we need the courage and leadership of elected officials such as Rep. Quigley to make it harder for dangerous people to get weapons and use them to harm our families and friends.”***

The bill’s three provisions include:

- **A second, hidden serial number on every gun:** Violent criminals, including the perpetrator of the shootings at Virginia Tech, have attempted to obliterate serial numbers on thousands of guns recovered in crimes each year in an effort to thwart law enforcement. This provision would require gun manufacturers to install additional, tamper-resistant serial numbers either inside the gun barrel or visible only in infrared light.

- **Maintaining background check records for 60 days:** Currently, the 24 hour record destruction requirement makes it harder to catch law-breaking gun dealers who falsify their records, and it makes it more difficult to identify and track straw purchasers who buy guns on behalf of criminals who wouldn't be able to pass a background check. A 60 day requirement would make criminal traces much more feasible.

- **Requiring gun dealers to perform inventory checks to report lost and stolen guns:**

The ATF reported that in 2007 it found 30,000 guns missing from dealer inventories based on its inspection of just fewer than 10 percent of gun dealers. If law-abiding dealers reported their inventories, the ATF would be much more effective at identifying and combating corrupt gun dealers.

Gun trace data, which is collected and maintained by the ATF, is a critical tool for law enforcement to track illegal gun crimes and trafficking. While criminals often obtain their guns on the black market, those guns generally originate from licensed dealers. Although the vast majority of gun dealers follow the law, a huge proportion of crime guns come from a handful of unscrupulous vendors. For example, the ATF estimated in 2000 that 57 percent of crime guns came from 1.2 percent of licensed dealers. Because every crime gun trace produces a lead, more accurate trace data would yield more accurate leads, and, in turn, a higher number of successful investigations.

As a member of the Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security Judiciary Subcommittee, Congressman Quigley has fought to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, and for safer neighborhoods in Chicago and around the country. He has [spoken out repeatedly in Washington and Chicago](#) about the need for safer gun laws, and last year [convened a forum](#) in Chicago on closing the gun-show loophole. Recently, he fought against a gun-lobby rider that was eventually left out of the Fiscal Year 2011 funding bill. The rider would have prevented the ATF from implementing a proposed rule to require border state gun dealers to report multiple sales of assault rifles.